

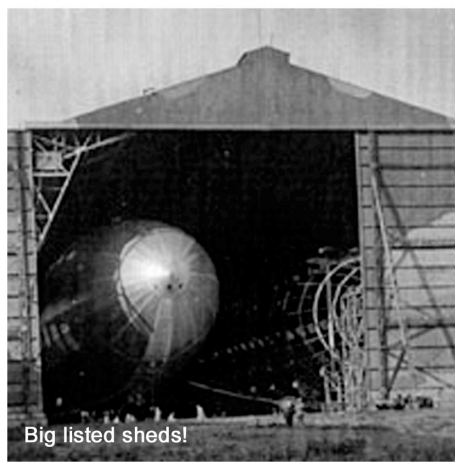
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### Editorial

Since the reincarnation of the ACO into the IHBC in 1998 the Institute has sought to be an umbrella organisation for a much wider range of conservation professionals ranging from architects to engineers to building surveyors, many of whom work in the private sector. In order to ensure that building owners, organisations, developers and local authorities have access to competent, professional and qualified consultants the IHBC has recently created the HESPR (Historic Environment Service Providers Recognition). This aims to provide companies with membership as a standard for quality control. This issues looks at the role of two of our regional consultancies from working on large scale projects to the very small. Towards the end of 2008 the branch also held its AGM at Woolverstone Hall in Suffolk and the Anglia Ruskin course in Chelmsford gained IHBC accreditation.

Conservation in masterplanning



Big listed sheds!

## Thank you to Beacon Planning

Independent planning, conservation and urban design consultancy  
 8 Quay Court, Colliers Lane, Stow-cum-Quay, Cambridge CB25 9AU Tel: 01223 810990

## The bigger picture: The role of consultants in masterplanning

John Burgess, Director of Beacon Planning Ltd, outlines the role that conservation professionals in the private sector can play through contributing to large scale urban design and planning projects in historic settings.



Image courtesy of van Heyningen and Haward.

Striking the right balance between realising the potential of a site and giving due weight to its conservation interest remains one of the key challenges facing developers and Local Authorities. Our recent experiences illustrate some of the issues which we have faced as Conservation consultants involved in major redevelopment schemes.

One of the main problems, from the point of view of the developer of a large site, is that there is no formal process for approving a 'masterplan'. In addition, most Local Authorities have a policy, based generally on the advice in PPG 15 Para. 4.18, that outline applications will not be accepted in Conservation Areas. A developer could therefore potentially need to submit a fully detailed scheme for a site of many hectares – uneconomic in the profligate world of twelve months ago and now pure fantasy.

Para. 4.18 encourages Local Authorities to draw up some form of development brief for a site. Whilst these are obviously hugely helpful in setting out parameters for height, mass etc, one of the most overlooked benefits which they can bring to the process of redevelopment is to set out the extent of supporting information which is needed with an application.

One of the recent schemes in which we were involved did precisely that. It made it clear that an Historic Building Assessment of the entire site would be needed. This document was produced in advance of any 'masterplanning' and showed which buildings merited retention. Only when this had been agreed with the Local Authority could the planning of the site begin.



Image courtesy of Glenn Howells Architects.

An outline application was accepted on this site (which was not in a Conservation Area) though Listed Building Consent and full planning permission was sought (and ultimately approved) for part of the site containing the Listed and curtilage listed structures. An outline consent, supported by amongst other things a Design Code, was approved for the rest of the site.

The benefits of undertaking a thorough 'context appraisal' of sites in Conservation Areas was perfectly illustrated by the Inspector's comments on another of our recent schemes. The site had been earmarked for redevelopment since the 1990s though no brief had ever been produced. We undertook a thorough appraisal of the Conservation Area drawing key conclusions which were agreed with Officers at the outset. These were then used to inform the design of a replacement building.

Despite support from Officers, the Council's architecture panel and local conservation groups, the scheme was refused, partly on design grounds. The Inspector's comment that 'what is proposed derives from an informed, analytical understanding of its context' made the Councillors' design misgivings appear entirely subjective.

English Heritage's 'Conservation Principles...' produced last year has as its third tenet 'Understanding the significance of places is vital'. It is also vital that this understanding is gained at the earliest possible stage, is generally agreed by all those involved in the process and that there is a clear 'audit trail' explaining in a Heritage or Design and Access Statement for example, how this understanding of the significance has influenced the design approach adopted. When this happens, even the most complex of sites can be sensitively developed.

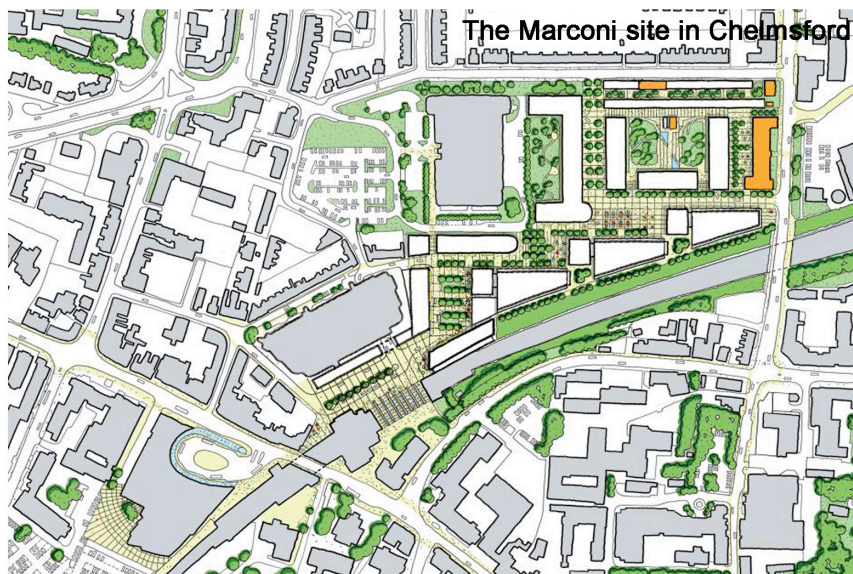


Image courtesy of Rogers, Stirk Harbour & Partners

## The smaller picture: Conservation of Historic artefacts

Conservation engineer David Hargreaves discusses some of his more unusual requests for advice in those strange far off lands outside our region....



The out of action whipping post

Recently in the course of my work I have been asked to carry out surveys and the preparation of a repair schedules for a Whipping Post and a Mill Pond - not quite historic buildings but they do add to the variety of projects in the office!

The Whipping Post in question had been run over by a runaway car and being Grade II listed had to be surveyed, repaired and re-erected.

The poor thing had had been removed from its town green location and my search found it abandoned amongst the debris in the local Highways Department's yard.

On inspection it was obvious that the bottom of the post was rotten and being of boxed heart conversion the timber was also affected internally, consequently the decision had to be taken to salvage all of the wrought-iron manacles and fit them to a new timber post. Excavation of the remainder of the post buried in the ground revealed that as a preservative measure and in order to protect it when buried this bottom section had been "charred and tarred" and so within the specification for the replacement post this was also specified and carried out by the contractor.

The post is now in position awaiting its first offender- unfortunately not but it does preserve the context of the town green and its relationship with the original police station situated some eight metres away.

[Ed: a quick check on EH's Listed buildings online website reveals over 50 listed whippings posts in the country! Better check those byelaws!]



What could be described as a rotten timber

In case you were wondering the Whipping Post is in Kirton, Lindsey, Lincolnshire and the bee boles on the following page are in Leadmill, Derbyshire.

Another unusual project that recently arrived into the office was the conservation of a mill pond connected to the lead industry in the Peak District. The local lead industry is now defunct but it is important to preserve any standing remains and this pond was used to supply water to drive the fans for the local smelter ( the remains of which are now under the local pub carpark). The pond does not hold water due to the porosity of the wall joints and absence of the control mechanisms.

The first site inspection revealed that one section of the boundary wall was constructed in dressed stonework and this stood out from the random nature of the adjacent sections of the wall.

Was this “a repair” or what?

A visit to the adjoining garden revealed four recesses constructed within the boundary wall and as a former beekeeper I instantly recognised these as Bee Boles - niches used to house straw skeps used by beekeepers before bee hives came into common use. The Bee Boles sheltered the fragile straw skeps from the elements.



The unusual masonry wall construction



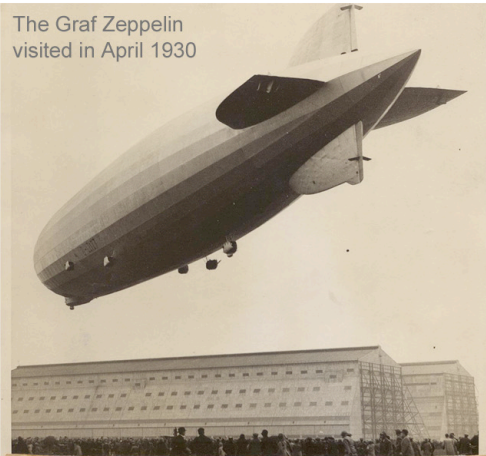
The revealing other side of the wall

Until the late 1800s bees were kept in straw skeps and in the wetter and windier parts of Britain these skeps were often kept in Bee Boles. Bee boles were built mostly in walls of stone which often bounded a garden or orchard and are usually situated facing south to south-east so that the bees would be warmed by the morning sun. Bee boles have survived in walls dated to every century from the 1100s to the 1800s and seem to have been a speciality in Britain where nearly 1000 sets have been recorded

NOTE - If you find any Bee Boles please contact International Bee Research Association - Register of Bee Boles & Other Beekeeping Structures c/o Woodside House, Woodside Hill, Gerrards Cross, Bucks, SL9 9TE

## Unusual Listed Buildings No. 7: Cardington Airship Sheds

The Graf Zeppelin  
visited in April 1930



Anyone who has ever travelled south of Bedford can't failed to have noticed these buildings. They are the goliaths of the heritage world, admired not for their beauty, but for their sheer size, scale and engineering endeavour.

No 1 shed (listed II\* and currently an English heritage building at risk) ) was built by Shorts in 1915 to house two airships, the R13 and R32. By 1917 800 people were working at the site and the company built the adjacent village, Shortstown, to house workers.

In 1919 the works was nationalised and became the Royal Airship Works. The following two decades became the era of the airship. Although the base was closed in 1921, it was reopened as the Imperial airship hangar in 1924. Shed No. 1 was increased in length to 815ft, and was joined in 1928 by No. 2 Shed (also grade II\*) which was dismantled and moved from Pulham in Norfolk. A huge airship mast was constructed for the civil programme in 1926. It was 202 feet high and 70 feet wide. Unfortunately this was pulled down for scrap metal in 1942.

The sheds are perhaps best known for housing the R101 "the socialist airship" sponsored by the government, and the R100 "the capitalist airship" sponsored by the private sector (designed by Barnes Wallis of bouncing bomb fame). The airships had a range of 5000 miles in order to travel around the empire, capturing the imagination of the public. Unfortunately the underpowered R101 crashed on its maiden voyage to India, coming down in France on October 5th 1930, killing all 48 on board. This ended Britain's airship programme and the R100, despite a succesful trip to Montreal, was scraped in 1931. The crash of the German Hindenburg in New Jersey in 1937 (spectacularly caught on film) signalled the end of an era.

During the second world war the airship sheds had a new lease of life in their role as a training centre for barrage balloons. Although camaflaged with painted houses, this was well known by the Germans as one evening Lord Haw Haw (William Joyce), broadcast that they had forgotten to build the chimneys! The Germans knew Cardington well as they had visited in the 1930's, so it is interesting that they chose never to attack. Maybe they had in mind a future use for them or, with their own fascination for airships, had too much respect to destroy them?

Shed 2 is currently used as a film studio whereas Shed 1 is a EH Bulding at Risk and awaiting possible enabling development. In the 1960's Cardington was appropriately used for the film 'Those Magnificent Men in Those Flying Machines'!

## 2008 AGM: Woolverstone Hall



**Held at Woolverstone Hall in October, the AGM was chaired by David Andrews. David takes us through the history of the hall and the day's events.**

Woolverstone Hall has been a school since 1947, but the educational use has left the house surprisingly intact. It is a beautiful and impressive example of a late 18th-century mansion located in spacious grounds by the Orwell estuary. It is also one of the best preserved buildings of John Johnson, county surveyor of Essex, architect of Chelmsford Shire Hall and rebuilder of Chelmsford cathedral.

Johnson designed the Hall for William Berners, for whom he had also built houses in London. It comprises a seven bay pedimented block with a portico, built of white brick above a ground floor faced with Portland stone. Woolverstone remained in the Berners family until 1937. In the 19th century, they built numerous houses and cottages on the estate of about 2000 acres, and provided the Hall with a complex of walled kitchen gardens containing several glasshouses. These are derelict and their future hangs on the outcome of a planning application that would see a house built in one of the walled enclosures. We were taken on a tour of the gardens by Joe Orsi, who is agent to the developer concerned and who had arranged for us to hold the AGM at the Hall.

The event was held jointly with the regional branch of SPAB, and about 45 people attended for what was a fascinating day. Appropriately, there was a talk by Paul Drury on enabling development. Paul had prepared English Heritage's original guidance on enabling development in 1999, and also the revised second edition published last year. The guidance had originally been prompted by English Heritage's concern about developments which destroy more than they save. Enabling development is by definition unacceptable in planning terms but considered justifiable by the benefits conferred, normally the conservation of a significant building or place. It is recommended that local authorities adopt a proactive approach to the issue of enabling development through the inclusion of policies in local development frameworks and the preparation of planning briefs for places where it is likely to be proposed. One point that emerges is that enabling development is inefficient. This is why the risk of damage outweighing the benefits is so high, because the value of the enabling development often has to be three to four times the value of the conservation deficit (the term used when the existing value of the place combined with the cost of restoration exceeds the final value). Grant schemes are much to be preferred, though who still has grant schemes today?

## Members Section

The branch has made several post appointments since the last newsletter and AGM:

- David Andrews has been appointed Vice Chair to support Chris Bennett
- Joe Orsi has been appointed education secretary to replace David Hargreaves (thanks David for the hard work over the years) and has already set about making contacts with the SPAB to work on improving local engagement and promotion.
- Phil Godwin has been appointed as the County Representative. He will be making contact with the county conservation officer forums to ensure that the IHBC adequately reflects their views and concerns regarding local and national conservation issues and will be reporting back to the council on any matters that need wider representation.
- Franziska Callaghan has been appointed policy secretary to ensure that the branch is involved and represented with national consultations.

Towards the end of last year the IHBC Council accredited the Anglia Ruskin conservation of buildings course. The course joins the Kings Lynn course run by former committee member John Selby (intake October 2009). Both courses offer an excellent education in building conservation and it is important that we keep a good knowledge base in the region. Please tell your architect, planner and surveyor friends!

### **\*\*HOT OFF THE PRESS\*\***

The branch event on April 22nd at Haugley Park Barn will look at encouraging sustainable development in new and historic buildings. The day will include a selection of speakers, and an exclusive site visit for 30 delegates to the Clay Fields housing scheme in Elmswell with the architect Cathy Hawley and Dawn Edwards from the Orwell Housing Association. The event is sure to be popular with housing associations coming to the fore as the principal house builders in the region. See enclosed flyer for further details.

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Chris Bennett  
David Andrews  
Stacey Weiser-Jones

Amanda Rix  
Prue Smith  
David Edleston  
Joe Orsi

[chrisbennett@norwich.gov.uk](mailto:chrisbennett@norwich.gov.uk)  
[dave.andrews@essexcc.gov.uk](mailto:dave.andrews@essexcc.gov.uk)  
[stacey.weiser@scamb.gov.uk](mailto:stacey.weiser@scamb.gov.uk)

[amanda.rix@norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:amanda.rix@norfolk.gov.uk)  
[pruesmith@btinternet.com](mailto:pruesmith@btinternet.com)  
[dedleston@s-norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:dedleston@s-norfolk.gov.uk)  
[j.orsi@btinternet.com](mailto:j.orsi@btinternet.com)

### **Committee members**

Franciska Callaghan; Chris Davis;  
Phil Godwin; Mike McConnell; Henry Painter